

EXHIBIT 3 ABLYAZOV ARRESTED IN FRANCE



KAZAKHSTAN

## Kazakh Opposition Leader Charged In France With Embezzlement; Complaint Filed By Kazakh Government

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By RFE/RL

Kazakh opposition leader Mukhtar Ablyazov has been charged in Paris with embezzling \$7.5 billion in a case brought by Kazakhstan, according to one of his lawyers.

Gerard Cholakian said Ablyazov, who was recently granted political asylum in France, was charged with "aggravated abuse of trust" and "money laundering" before he was released under judicial oversight.

"The Paris prosecutor's office picked up a complaint from Kazakhstan that it could have refused to take into consideration and foolishly raised it with a French examining magistrate," the lawyer said, according to AFP.

The Kazakh government filed the complaint in Paris in 2017 against the former oligarch and accused him of having embezzled more than \$7.5 billion from Kazakh bank BTA, where he served as CEO before it was nationalized in 2009.

He allegedly granted loans without guarantees to front companies that he benefitted from.

Ablyazov is wanted by Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine on suspicion of embezzling some \$5 billion.

In order to file suit, the Kazakh authorities acted on a French legal provision that allows a court to try a foreigner whose extradition has been rejected for political reasons, for a crime or offense committed outside France.

French authorities rejected a request for his extradition in 2016 on the grounds it was politically motivated.

In its ruling granting asylum to the former banker, dated September 29 and quoted by Le Monde, France's National Court of Asylum Issues (CDNA) said the court deplored direct pressure from Kazakhstan and "the obvious attempts by outside agents to exert influence on the asylum authorities."

Le Monde said the court had reviewed for several months Ablyazov's appeal against an earlier decision by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons to reject his asylum request.

His lawyer, Bota Jardemalie, said on October 4 that the CDNA's decision was made "despite the most massive political pressure by Kazakhstan on the leadership of France, international lobbying organized by [Kazakhstan's] regime, its dirty PR, fabricated accusations, manipulations and direct pressure on the French justice

[system]."

Ablyazov has been a vocal critic of Kazakh President Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev and his predecessor, Nursultan Nazarbaev.

In November 2018, a court in Kazakhstan sentenced Ablyazov in absentia to life in prison after finding him guilty of organizing the 2004 murder of Erzhan Tatishev, the head TuranAlem bank, which was later renamed BTA.

In a separate trial in absentia in Kazakhstan that ended in 2017, Ablyazov was convicted of embezzlement, abuse of office, and organizing a criminal group and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Ablyazov denies all the charges, saying they are politically motivated.

With reporting by AFP

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